Thornthwaite fecit

Mrs. SIDDONS as MEDEA.

I once had Parents — Ye endearing names!
How my torn heart with recollection bleeds!

London Printed for J. Bell British Library Strand Feb.ry 8.th 1794.

MEDEA.

Thea. *The injured daughter of* Æ*ætes.*
Thou mayst discover thro those parting boughs
her *Sword.*

ilton pinx.t *Grignion sculp.*

London. Printed for J. Bell. British Library. Strand. Pebr. 1st 1792.

MEDEA.

A

TRAGEDY,

By Mr. GLOVER.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOK,

By Permission of the Manager.

"The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation."

LONDON:

Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction of

JOHN BELL, British Library, STRAND,

Bookseller to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

MDCCXCII.

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MEDEA.

THIS is the last produced of four plays by different authors upon the same subject. For those previous to the present, it is enough to stile them bad translations of a bad original—they are all from SENECA.

Mr. GLOVER however has taken a scope less servile and better suited to his powers; for though he has kept SENECA constantly in his eye, yet his poem bears very frequent marks of originality and skill.

It does not in truth appear designed for the stage under our present modes of thinking, retaining so much of the declamatory sentiment and the unmanagable chorus of SENECA.—We do not recollect its performance more than for the benefits of an ACTRESS of great merit—the late Mrs. YATES.

In the closet it will give pleasure to such as are fond of the ANCIENT DRAMA; a Greek subject in the dress of a Roman poet, modernized a little by an English writer of considerable merit.

PROLOGUE.

THOUGH wild our theme, the grave historian's page
Hath sanctify'd the tale through ev'ry age.
Who hath not heard of Argo sent from Greece,
Of Jason's labours for the golden fleece,
And fond Medea's ill-requited aid
To that false hero, who his vows betray'd?
In ev'ry clime, where learned Muses reign,
The stage hath known Medea's mournful strain;
Hath giv'n the flying car, and magic rod,
To her, th' avowed descendant of a god.

The storms of trouble, which afflict the great,
Teach private life to prize its tranquil state.
That truth the moral of our fable shows
Too well in scenes of unexampled woes,
Which here will ravage an exalted breast,
Of merit conscious, and with shame opprest;
Where love and fury, grief and madness join'd,
O'erturn the structure of a godlike mind.
Pow'r, wisdom, science, and her birth divine,
In vain to shield her from distress combine:
Nor wisdom, pow'r, nor science yield relief;
Her potent wand can vanquish all, but grief:

In vain her winged chariot sweeps the air,
To shun that mightier sorceress, despair.

The characters and passions hence exprest
Are all submitted to the feeling breast;
Let ancient story justify the rest.

Dramatis Personae.

DRURY-LANE.

Men.

JASON,	Mr. Smith.
ÆSON,	Mr. Palmer.
CREON,	Mr. Bensley.
LYCANDER,	Mr. Farren.
First Colchian,	Mr. Packer.
First Corinthian,	Mr. Griffiths.

Women.

MEDEA,	Mrs. Yates.
THEANO,	Mrs. Hopkins.
HECATE,	Mr. Bransby.

First Phæacian.

Colchians, Phæacians, Thessalians, *and* Corinthians.

SCENE *in the citadel of* Corinth, *between a grove sacred to* Juno, *and the royal palace, with a distant prospect of the sea.*

MEDEA.

ACT I. SCENE I.

LYCANDER *seeing* THEANO *advancing from the Temple of* JUNO.

Lycander.

THAT form divine, by all rever'd and lov'd,
Moves from the temple. On her pensive brow
Sits holy care with gentleness and grace,
Whose placid beams humanity reveal.
She stops contemplating the sea. Theano—
Why with that musing aspect tow'rd the main
Stand'st thou regardless of thy brother's voice?

Thea. Imperial Juno in an awful vision,
This morn presented to my wondring sight
The shapes of strangers by distress pursu'd;
Whom to the refuge of this holy place
I must receive obedient to her charge:
And lo! a vessel turns her hast'ning prow
To Corinth's harbour.

Lyc. Ten well measur'd strokes
Of her swift oars will reach the shore below:
But hear my errand. Creon knows, thy altar
Unclad with garlands still proclaims thy firmness
Against his daughter's marriage; then prepare
Thy hallow'd eye to meet his threat'ning brow;
Fence thy chaste ear against his impious vaunts,
Which urge th' example of Almighty Jove
For his own thirst of empire.

Thea. Say to Creon,
Kings should aspire to imitate the gods,
Not in their pow'r, but goodness; human virtues
More nigh to Heav'n's perfection may be rais'd,
Than human grandeur: Jove derides the toil
Of mortal pow'r, but smiles on righteous deeds.

Lyc. Thus would I speak, Theano, could my words
And thoughts be tun'd in harmony like thine;
But danger breaks that union in a palace,
And strains the tongue to discord with the heart:
Then pacify thy goddess, when the king
Exacts my service, if discretion wears
A mask of duty; kindly thou impute
Blame to my station, and absolve Lycander.
But look; yon vessel hath discharg'd its train,
Who climb the hill with aged steps and slow.
Nay, turn thy eyes; a second troop of strangers
March through the city. Sable is their garb,
Their mien dejected. This demands my care.
Farewell. [*Exit.*

Enter Colchians.

Thea. What forms are these? All-potent goddess!
I feel thee now; my vision is accomplish'd.
1 *Colc.* O thou, who seem'st the guardian of these shades,
Which from the isthmus shew their tow'ring growth,
The sailor's guide through Corinth's double main;
Permit an humble stranger to enquire,
What pow'r is worshipp'd here.
Thea. The very garb!
The figures painted in my recent vision! [*Aside.*
Thy feet, O stranger, stand on sacred earth.
These shades enclose the venerable fane
Erected there to hymeneal Juno,
Whose presence guards the citadel of Corinth.
1 *Colc.* Then let us lift our suppliant voice unblam'd,
That in the refuge of this hallow'd grove
Our exil'd feet may rest.
Thea. Your suit is granted.
So wills the pow'r inhabiting that temple.
And say, ye favour'd of connubial Juno,
What are your names and country?
1 *Colc.* From the banks
Of distant Phasis, and the Euxin wave,
Lost to our native mansions, are we come,
Ill-guided Colchians, to the walls of Corinth.
On king Æetes' daughter we attend,
That boast of Asia, to the sun ally'd,

To Hecaté and Circé, more illustrious
In her own virtues, for her wisdom known
Through every clime, the all-endow'd Medea.

Thea. Where is your princess?

1 *Colc.* In that anchor'd bark,
Which to your haven from Iolcos sail'd;
Where, on his specious embassy to Creon,
Her husband left her on a lonely pillow.
At length, impatient of his tedious absence,
She and her sons have brav'd th' unsparing deep.

Thea. Yet more unsparing, than the deep, is man.
So will this daughter of affliction find,
When her sad feet are planted on this shore.

1 *Colc.* How swift are evil tidings! While our keel
But lightly touch'd that well-frequented strand,
We heard, th' ungrateful Jason would divorce her,
This day, to wed the daughter of your monarch.

Thea. If Heav'n prevent not. Through the solemn shade
Direct thy view. That high rais'd altar note
Close by the fountain. Thither lead your princess.
This is a refuge, which no regal pride
High-swoll'n with pow'r, nor multitude inflam'd
By madding discord, nor invader's rapine
Have e'er profan'd. Return. Yon palace opens.
No friend of yours approaches. It is Creon.
Thou too be present, goddess, and illumine
The earth-born darkness of thy servant's mind.

[*Exeunt* Colchians.

Enter CREON.

Creon. Why do they paint Medea's woes to me?
A king should lift his steady front on high,
And, while he gazes on the radiant throne,
Where bright ambition sits amid the stars,
The hopes, the fears, the miseries of others
Pass by unheeded in his contemplation.
Art thou come forth with those ill-omen'd looks
To blast the public festival?

Thea. Howl, howl,
Deluded city; banish from thy dwellings
The genial banquet; fill thy streets with mourners
To celebrate in notes of lamentation
A nuptial day offensive to the gods.

Creon. Think'st thou, thy priestly office can avail
To counteract the high designs of kings?
Go, and with bridal chaplets deck thy altar,
Lest thou provoke me to confound thy pride
Elate with wreaths of sanctity in vain.

Thea. Not that the holy fillet binds my temples,
Not, that before the altar I present
The public victim, or a nation's vows
By me are usher'd to th' eternal thrones,
Misjudging monarch, is my heart elate;
It is, that virtue owns me for her servant.
Benevolence and pity guide my will,
Beneficence and charity my deeds.
Ev'n now, though deem'd importunate and proud,

My soul bows down in heaviness for Creon,
And at his danger sighs in mournful warnings.

Creon. Repeat thy warnings to the coward's ear.
My danger?

Thea. From that goddess, who inspir'd
The Colchian princess to desert her father,
To aid the Grecian heroes, and restore
Our lost possession of the golden fleece.
The voice of loud complaint from yonder beach
Already strikes her ear. Medea——

Creon. Ha!
What of Medea?

Thea. Is arriv'd in Corinth.

Creon. Arriv'd!

Thea. She and her children, to reclaim
A husband and a father in that prince
Whom thou hast destin'd to Creüsa's bed.

Creon. Thou, who obtain'st infinity of pow'r,
Lord of Olympus, king of gods and men,
Dost thou regard thy sceptred sons below?
Say, shall a female hand o'erturn the basis,
Which I am founding to enlarge my sway?
If so, resume the diadem I wear;
Its scanty circle I reject with scorn.

Thea. Ye winds, disperse impieties like these;
Nor let their sound profane the heav'nly threshold.

Creon. Hence to thy temple.

Thea. Thou defy'st not me,
But her, whose awful presence fills that temple.

Imperfect victims, inauspicious off'rings,
And sounds portentous have forboded long
Her high displeasure. Her apparent form
Stood near my pillow at the op'ning dawn,
And strictly charg'd me to receive this stranger.
Think too, what lofty science arms Medea
With more than nature's force.

Creon. I think it false,
And all the fabled wonders of her charms,
Thy legends too of inauspicious off'rings,
Imperfect victims, and portentous sounds,
What priests may publish, and a king despise.
Hence to the temple.

Thea. Farewell, rash prince. My duty is discharg'd.

Creon. Stay. Dost thou mean to give this Colchian refuge?

Thea. Can I dispute a deity's injunction?

Creon. Go, dream again; procure some wiser vision,
Which may instruct thee to avoid my wrath.

[*Exit* Theano.

Enter LYCANDER.

Creon. Where hast thou loiter'd to conceal th' arrival
Of this accurst enchantress, and the purpose
Of thy rebellious sister to protect her?

Lyc. My lord, these tidings are to me unknown;
But further news of high import I bear.
Colchian Æson, Jason's royal sire,
Advancing now, anticipates this notice.

Enter Æson, *with* Thessalians *in mourning.*

Creon. Thrice hail! my double brother. Do I owe
Thy timely presence to our ancient friendship,
Or to th' alarm, Medea's flight might raise,
Who scarce precedes thy fortunate appearance?
My sudden joy o'erlook'd that dusky robe.

Æs. It suits my fortune. Heavy with affliction,
My weary feet are banish'd from Iolcos.
How my fell brother, Pelias, that usurper
Of my paternal sway, was foil'd and slain,
Thou know'st. His son retreated into Thrace;
Whence he hath pour'd a savage host of ruffians,
With unexpected inroad, and so rapid,
That instant flight alone preserv'd thy friend,
Thy suppliant now for aid.

Creon. Dismiss thy cares.
Soon shall thy warlike son display his banners,
Extend my frontier, and recover thine.
More of thy fortunes shalt thou tell hereafter;
But give to gladness this selected day
Of Jason's nuptials.

Æs. Nobly thou reliev'st
A king's distress. Now satisfy the parent.
Lead me to Jason.

Creon. Follow to my palace.

Lyc. He is not there.

Creon. What say'st thou?

Lyc. On the sands

Alone with melancholy pace he treads,
As I but now descry'd him from this rock.
Æs. With melancholy pace?
Creon. His promise binds him
This very morning to espouse Creüsa.
Æs. Perhaps with fresh calamity o'erworn,
I doubt too much; yet hear me.
Creon. Thy appearance
Removes all doubts. Lycander, find the prince.
Say, who is come to celebrate his nuptials.
Æs. [*To* Lycander.] Is he a stranger to Medea's landing?
Lyc. I trust he is.
Æs. They must not meet.
Creon. Lycander,
See, thou prevent it. Send Theano to us;
And let her bring obedience: else her fault
Shall on thy head be punish'd. [*Exit* Lyc.
Æs. Should my son
Once see Medea!
Creon. Can her looks annul
A league like ours?
Æs. Alas! thou little know'st her.
Her eyes surpasses that refulgent star,
Which first adorns the evening; and her talents
Exceed her beauty. "Like the forked thunder
"She wields resistless arguments; her words
"With more than lightning's subtlety are wing'd."
Creon. Why art thou startled?
Æs. She is there—ascending;

My sight, acquainted with her haughty steps,
Shrinks, ere they touch the summit of this hill.

Creon. Which is the far-fam'd sorceress of Colchis?

Æs. Too well distinguish'd by her stately port,
And elevation o'er that weeping train,
She tow'rs a genuine offspring of the gods.
Rage on her brow, and anguish in her eye,
Denounce the growing tempest of her mind.

Creon. Now, god of waters, since thy partial hand
Thrusts this barbarian outcast on my shores,
Back to thy floods the fugitive I spurn.

Æs. What means my royal friend? Retire. Avoid
This formidable woman, who may wound
Our dignity. I know her soaring mind,
Which, all enlighten'd with sublimest knowledge,
Disdains the state and majesty of kings,
Nor ranks with less than deity itself.

Creon. Curse on her beauty, and majestic mien!
But let the rumour of her pow'r be true;
The Sun, her boasted ancestor, may arm
Her hand with fire; let Hecaté and Circé,
The goddesses of spells, and black enchantments,
Attend her steps, and clothe her feet in terror:
We have our fiends; the sorceress shall find,
That grief, despair, distraction wait our nod,
To wring her heart through all her magic guards.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter MEDEA, *her two Children*, Colchians *and* Phæacians.

Med. No more, I charge you. Noble minds, op-
press'd

By injuries, disdain the sound of comfort.
Ye fiends and furies, wont to leave your flames
At my command, and tremble at my charms,
Now, now ascend, and aid Medea's rage.
Give me the voice of thunder to resound
My indignation o'er the earth and heav'ns;
That I, who draw my lineage from the Sun,
Am fall'n below the basest lot of slaves:
That anguish, want, despair, contempt and shame,
Are heap'd together by the hands of fate,
Whelm'd in one mass of ruin on my head,
And dash my struggling virtue to the ground.
1 *Colc.* Why to our faithful counsels art thou deaf?
Med. Canst thou by counsel waft my exil'd feet
To my lost parents, my forsaken friends,
And native palace?—Oh! I gave him all;
To him my virgin bosom I resign'd,
For him the regal mansion of my father,
The lov'd companions of my youth deserted;
From foul defeat, from shame, from death I sav'd him:
What more could woman?—Yet he weds another.
Me he abandons, and these helpless infants,
Forlorn, unsheltered in a foreign clime,
To ev'ry outrage, ev'ry want expos'd.
"Blast his perfidious head, vindictive lightnings!
"Unhappy woman! Canst thou, in the height
"Of thy despair, thy rage and indignation,
"Canst thou pursue him with a heavier curse,
"Than to be plung'd in woes, which equal thine?"

1 *Colc.* Though stung with just resentment, due regard
Pay to my age, fidelity and service.
A long and painful traverse from Iolcos
Hast thou endur'd, nor since thy landing here,
The needful succour known of rest, or food.

Med. Talk not to me of nourishment and rest.
Food to these lips, and slumber to these eyes,
Must ever now be strangers.

1 *Colc.* By the beams
Of thy forefather, never will I see
Thy wisdom bound in vassalage to passion.
Once more I warn thee, princess, to thy refuge.
This is the consecrated bow'r of Juno.
Thou underneath the hospitable shade
Sit suppliant down.

Med. Improvident Medea!
To raise another from destruction's depths,
To wealth, to glory raise him, yet thyself
Leave destitute and suppliant! Oh! what art thou,
Whom blinded men unerring wisdom call?
Thou couldst not pierce the thin, the airy veil,
Which from my eyes conceal'd the paths of danger;
Nor canst thou now repel th' increasing storm
Of rapid anguish, which o'erturns my peace:
Down to the endless gloom of dreary night;
Hence, let me drive thee from my inmost soul,
That nothing calm may hover nigh my heart
To cool its pain, and save me from distraction. [*Exit.*

" *A Colc.* Come on, ye soft companions in affliction,

" Melodious daughters of Phæacia's isle;
" In strains alternated let us chant our grief:
" Perhaps our mistress we may charm to rest.
" *A Phæa.* O music, sweet artificer of pleasure,
" Why is thy science exercis'd alone
" In festivals, on hymeneal days,
" And in the full assemblies of the happy?
" Ah! how much rather should we court thy skill
" In sorrow's gloomy season, to diffuse
" Thy smooth allurements through the languid ear
" Of self-devour'd affliction, and delude
" The wretched from their sadness.
" *A Colc.* Let us melt
" In tuneful accents flowing to our woes;
" That so Medea may at least reflect,
" She is not singly wretched. Let her hear
" Our elegies, whose measur'd moan records
" Our friends forsaken, and our country lost;
" That she no longer to her sole distress
" Her deep-revolving spirit may confine,
" But by our sorrows may relieve her own.
" *First part of the music.* [*Iambics.*
" *A Colc.* Ye stately battlements and tow'rs,
" Imperial Corinth's proud defence;
" Thou citadel, whose dewy top
" The clouds in fleecy mantles fold,
" Projecting o'er the briny foam
" An awful shadow, where the might
" Of Neptune urges either shore,
" And this contracted isthmus forms:

" Ah! why your glories to admire
" Do we repining Colchians stand,
" Ill-fated strangers! on the banks
" Of silver-water'd Phasis born.

" [*Trochaics.*

" *A Phæa.* Pride of art, majestic columns,
" Which beneath the sacred weight
" Of that god's refulgent mansion
" Lift your flow'r-insculptur'd heads;
" Oh! ye marble channell'd fountains,
" Which the swarming city cool,
" And, as art directs your murmurs,
" Warble your obedient rills:
" You our eyes obscur'd by sorrow
" View unconscious of your grace,
" Mourning still our lost Phæacia,
" Long-remember'd native isle.

" [*Iambics.*

" *A Phæa.* O that on fam'd Peneus' banks
" The nymphs of Pelion had bemoan'd
" Their shady haunts to ashes turn'd
" By Heav'n's red anger! hateful pines,
" Which form'd thy well-compacted sides,
" O Argo, fatal to our peace.
" Thou never then through Adria's wave
" Hadst reach'd Phæacia's blissful shore,
" Nor good Alcinöus the hand
" Of Jason with Medea join'd,
" Nor sent us weeping from our homes,
" Her luckless train, to share her grief.

" *Second Part.* [*Trochaics.*

" *A Phæa.* Known recesses, where the echoes
" Through the hollow-winding vale,
" And the hill's retentive caverns
" Tun'd their voices from our songs;
" Shade-encircled, verdant levels,
" Where the downy turf might charm
" Weary feet to joyous dances
" Mix'd with madrigals and pipes:
" O ye unforgotten pleasures,
" Pleasures of our tender youth,
" You we never shall revisit,
Ill-exchang'd for scenes of wo.
" *A Colc.* From the polish'd realms of Greece,
Where the arts and muses reign,
" Truth and justice are expell'd.
" Here from palaces and tow'rs
" Snowy-vested faith is fled;
" While beneath the shining roofs
" Falsehood stalks in golden robes.
" Dreary Caucasus! again
" Take us to thy frozen breast;
" Let us shiver on thy ridge,
" Ever-during pile of ice
" Gather'd from the birth of time!
" *A Phæa.* Cheering breeze with sportive pinion
" Gliding o'er the crisped main,
" With our tresses thou shalt wanton
" On our native sands no more.
" Fountains, whose melodious waters,

" Cooling our Phæacian grots,
" Oft our eyes to sweetest slumber
" With their lulling falls beguil'd;
" We have chang'd your soothing warble
" For the doleful moan of wo,
" And, our peaceful moss deserting,
" Found a pillow thorn'd with care. [*Exeunt.*"

ACT II. SCENE I.

JASON *advancing from the End of the Stage,* THEANO *on one Side,* MEDEA *in the Grove.*

Theano.

THE princely steps of Jason are in sight.
He scarce conjectures, that th' indignant breast
Of her he injures, pours from yonder shades
Its high-ton'd anguish. Yet, illustrious false one,
What stinging thoughts distort thy manly frame!
How have thy gestures lost their wonted grace
In this keen struggle with upbraiding conscience!
Thou soon, before that inward judge arraign'd,
Shalt hear me plead thy wrong'd Medea's cause.
" This is the crisis——Too complacent hero,
" By pride untutor'd, though misled by error,
" Thou wilt be calm and gentle to rebuke."

Jas. Press'd by a father's absolute decree,
Solicited by Corinth's potent lord,
Aw'd with the specious sound of public good,

I have consented, and the hour is nigh.
Oh! in some future hour of sad reflection
May not my heart with self-reproach confess,
This plea of public welfare was ambition;
And filial duty was a feeble tie
To authorise the breach of sacred vows.
Med. [*In the grove.*] Ungrateful Jason!
Jas. Whence proceeds this voice?
Med. [*In the grove.*] Oh, sire of light, thou seest my wrongs.
Jas. Again!
Imagination, pregnant with remorse,
In sounds unreal yields its birth of terror.
Med. [*In the grove.*] Ye arbiters of oaths, and plighted faith,
O Jove and Themis, hear!
Jas. It is a voice!
Resembling hers, when she, alas! is far;
No mockery of fancy. [*Leans against the scene.*
Thea. [*Advancing.*] On his cheek
Health seems to wither. O'er his shaded sight
The shiv'ring eye-lids close. A creeping tremor
O'erspreads his fading lips, and dewy limbs.
Bless'd be these signals of returning virtue.
Hail! prince. Why stand'st thou list'ning? What alarms thee?
Jas. An awful murmur from offended heav'n,
Through yonder branches, issu'd in a voice,
Which chill'd my spirit, and unnerv'd my strength.
Thea. What didst thou hear?

Jas. Medea's well-known accents
Thrice did the vocal prodigy repeat,
Though seas divide her from these faithless arms.

Thea. There is no need of prodigy. Mere nature
In thy own breast will startle, when thou know'st,
It was Medea's self, who call'd on Jason.

Jas. Herself?

Thea. The injur'd daughter of Æetes,
But newly-wafted from Thessalia's shore,
Thou may'st discover through those parting boughs;
Where she is seated near the fountain's brink
With her pale cheek reclining on the altar.

Jas. [*Looking on the grove.*] Stern deities of vengeance, and of justice!
Now pass your sentence, Nemesis and Thamis!
My ill-wrought web of hated life unravel,
Which was not wove for happiness.

Thea. Be patient.

Jas. Peculiar woes through ev'ry stage of being
Were Jason's portion. Early I beheld
My father's crown usurp'd. My youth subjected
To an insidious tyrant was devoted
A sacrifice in Colchis—So he hop'd,
And I wish now!—I triumph'd—Glory follow'd,
The source of new calamity to me.
Where is that glory? Serving selfish kings,
Abetting falsehood, perjury and fraud.

Thea. Turn thy attention from thy own distress,
To feel, what others suffer by thy frailty,
Thy wife and offspring. Listen.

Jas. I obey.

Thea. How couldst thou lead this all-excelling princess
From clime to clime, th' associate in thy toils,
To fall the victim in a foreign land
Of those unrighteous statutes, which appoint
Imperious husbands masters of divorce;
How think, th'establish'd practice of the Greeks,
Or all, which varnish'd policy might plead,
Could e'er absolve thee from a solemn tie,
With such uncommon obligations bound,
By those superior, those unwritten laws,
Which honour whispers to the conscious heart?

Jas. O venerable woman, lend thy aid.

Thea. Atone thy fault. Repentance is heroic,
And holds its rank among the manly virtues.

Jas. Yes, I renounce Creüsa, and her kingdom.
Yet see this breast with new-born terror beat.
Not all my trials through unnumber'd dangers,
From monsters, famine, from the raging deep,
And dark-brow'd care, have so confirm'd my courage,
But that I tremble at th' impending conflict.
"I dread that scorn and fury, whose excess
"May kill repentance, and provoke destruction."

Enter LYCANDER.

Lyc. The king, Theano, summons thee before him.

Thea. What time?

Lyc. This instant.

Thea. I obey his pleasure.

Jas. Thou wilt not leave me?

Thea. Thou hast heard this summons.
Heed my last words. Maintain thy just resolves.
Lycander, let thy conduct leave no room
For my reproaches, and the wrath of Juno.

Lyc. Fear not; thy counsels shall be treasur'd here.

[*Exit* Theano.

"I see a sudden change. My single charge
"I will deliver, and forbear enquiry."
Long have I sought thee, prince. The royal Æson
Is now in Corinth, and will soon accost thee.

Jas. My father here! Why, multiply distress,
Accumulate perplexity and shame
On my devoted head, ye righteous pow'rs!

Lyc. Prince, he is near; and I return to Creon.

[*Exit.*

Enter ÆSON.

Jas. Amaz'd, distracted, tortur'd, I retain
My veneration here. O sacred head,
What from thy peaceful habitation calls
Thy silver hairs to these abodes of wo?
Or com'st thou wrapt in sable to lament
Our mutual errors, and dishonour'd names?

Æs. Why I am here, why bearing this apparel,
Too soon will Jason know. But first reply;
Why on the sea's waste margin was my son
Observ'd to trace his solitary path;
When Corinth pauses in her gen'ral gladness,
Her choral songs and minstrelsy suspending
For Jason's absence?

Jas. Better she should wait,
Whole ages wait, than justice be suspended,
And the return of honour be unwelcom'd.
Æs. Can I interpret these mysterious words?
Jas. Hast thou not heard, my father, that Medea
Weeps in that bow'r, invoking Jove and Themis
To witness what returns she meets from Jason?
Æs. What most I dreaded. Then my aged limbs
Must wear these garments still unchang'd, thy country,
Thy friends, thy father's house unceasing mourn.
The woes of exile more severe, than time,
Indent the furrows deeper on these brows.
Jas. The woes of exile?
Æs. Yes, the race of Pelias
Force me to Corinth. Young Acastus reigns.
The gen'rous Creon promises his aid;
That aid will Jason cruelly prohibit.
Jas. Then we begin to reap the bitter harvest
From seeds, which selfish policy had sown.
When I was hurry'd to these fatal walls,
And, gall'd with jealous fear, Medea left thee;
Heav'n, in that period, from the roll of fortune
Eras'd our titles, and the with'ring sceptre
Shrunk from thy grasp.
Æs. Nay, look not thus entranc'd.
What draws thy eye?
Jas. She rises from the grove,
A sun disfigur'd by a mist of sorrow
Rais'd from our crime. Awake thee—What remains,

But that we fall before our known protectress,
Confessing both in Jove's offended sight,
How much of weak inconstancy hath stain'd
My name of hero, what ignoble guile
Disgrac d thy regal head?

Æs. And who must save Iolcos?

Jas. She. Medea's gen'rous wisdom,
Which in itself contains the strength of armies,
And quell'd old Pelias, can dethrone the son.

Æs. What frenzy guides thee? Follow me to Creon.

Jas. Rest thou with me.

Æs. Inhuman! dost thou covet
To see my age and dignity revil'd?
I charge thee, follow.

Jas. Riveted, I wait,
As if congenial with this rock I grew
From its foundations, till Medea come.

Æs. Revolter! she is coming—But my eye
Shall not be far. Remember, thou dost hazard
Thy country's love, perhaps thy father's too. [*Exit.*

Enter MEDEA, Colchians *and* Phæacians.

Jas. How shall I face her injur'd worth, how choose
The most auspicious moment to accost her?

Med. Why have I science to command the moon,
To draw the spirits from the realms of night,
And trace the hidden pow'rs of baneful nature?
Why am I wise, unless to feel my sorrows
With sharper sensibility, and prove,
How weak is wisdom struggling with despair?

1 *Cole.* Its succour yet solicit. Wisdom smooths
Each thorny path, and Virtue is her sister.

Med. Old man, be silent. Hath Medea's grief
The leisure now to hear thy moral tale?
No, let me loath my being, "curse the sun,
"My bright forefather," and upbraid the heav'ns,
That I was ever born. I will exclaim;
I will demand, ye unrelenting pow'rs,
Why your injustice terrifies the earth
With such an image of distress as mine.

Jas. This interview I see in all its terrors;
But further pause will turn suspense to madness.
Medea—I am come———

Med. And dar'st thou come,
With that unmatch'd ingratitude and falsehood,
To face the constant worth, thou now betray'st?

Jas. I come to lay my errors in thy view.

Med. No, to my view display Creüsa's beauty;
Dwell on her merit, who excels Medea.

Jas. The deity, presiding o'er that temple,
I call to witness, that my father's pleasure———

Med. And dost thou urge thy father, thou perfidious?
Thy father! oh! that I had been thus wise,
And ne'er forgot the duty of a child.
Thy father gave thee a precarious being,
In its first flight of glory doom'd to fall,
Fresh in its prime, a victim to oblivion,
Had not I sav'd and borne thee to renown.

Jas. Jason's life and glory are thy gifts.

Med. I gave thee too my love, my virgin love,

My friends, my country, my unspotted fame,
My joy, my peace, all, all on thee bestow'd;
What could a father more? Him too my pow'r
Snatch'd from oppression, and his treach'rous brother,
Usurping Pelias slew, that cruel Pelias,
Who on thy youth impos'd the dang'rous toil,
Whence I preserv'd thee—But, my wrath, be still.
Inconstant, base alike, both son and sire
Deserve my scorn.

Jas. Shall contumelious harshness
Blot those perfections from the son deriv'd,
And not one moment to thy wisdom yield,
That thou may'st hear me?

Med. No, thou most ingrate
Of all, who e'er forgot their benefactors.
When the fam'd Argo, fraught with Grecian princes,
Pierc'd with its beak the sandy verge of Phasis,
What daring hand but mine their trophies rais'd?
The golden fleece amid th' enchanted grove
Had hung untouch'd beside its scaly guardian;
Wild dogs and vultures had devour'd your lambs;
Your bones had whiten'd on the Colchian strand.
I fearless stept between the narrow bounds,
Which parted your devoted lives from fate,
With mystic spells entranc'd the sleepless dragon,
Bent to the yoke the brazen-footed bulls,
And gave you safety, victory, and fame.

Jas. I own thy merits; and the deep remembrance—

Med. For ever be detested that remembrance.

Curs'd be the skill, which fram'd your fatal bark,
Accurs'd the gale, which fill'd her spreading canvas;
But doubly curs'd the hour, the hour of ruin,
When first I viewed that smiling treach'rous form,
And fondly trusted to the fair delusion.
"O that amid the terrors of enchantment,
"When, for thy sake, profoundest hell was open'd,
"Some fiend had whirl'd me to the desert pole;
"Or that the earth, dividing with my charms,
"Low, as her central cavern, had entomb'd me!"

Jas. I feel thy anguish, daughter of Æetes,
Which would o'erwhelm me, had I less to offer,
Than my repentant heart.

Med. Thy perjur'd heart,
Foul with ingratitude and guilt. Avaunt,
And give it thy Creüsa; I despise thee.

Jas. Think, who I am. Though criminal I stand
And mourn my fault, forget not, I am Jason,
By fame in brightest characters recorded.
Deserving thy reproaches, I endur'd them;
But sure the lustre of my name is proof
Against contempt.

Med. The recompence of falsehood.

Jas. Hold, I conjure thee?—Nay, I will be heard.
When first I sail'd for Corinth, all my purpose
Was to establish, by a league with Creon,
Th' unstable throne of Thessaly, since crush'd
By fierce Acastus. Æson's strict injunction
To wed Creüsa follow'd my arrival;

When thou wert distant from my sight, and Creon
Would grant his friendship———

Med. But by thy disgrace.

Jas. Impatient woman!

Med. Could a king's protection
Be rank'd with mine, thou weakly-perjur'd man?

Jas. Thou shalt not stop me, by th' immortal gods!
I will proceed—" Intemp'rate passion stifles
" Her breathless voice—Oh, majesty! Oh, wisdom!
" Oh, features once divine! how long shall rage
" Depoil your grace?" No other form of beauty,
No qualities or talents to thy own
Have I preferr'd. By empire's glaring bubble,
By policy's ensnaring voice misled,
Or by mistaken duty to a parent,
I swerv'd from sacred faith. At thy approach
Light flashes through my error; to thy feet
Contrition brings me, no ignoble suppliant:
The scourge of tyrants, vanquisher of monsters,
Thy instrument of glory, now most glorious,
That he subdues himself, implores thy pardon.
Oh, unadvis'd!—Obdurate!—While I sue,
Thy unforgiving brow returns disdain.
Think of thy children!

Med. Traitor, dar'st thou name them?

Jas. Beware; destruction, with a hunter's speed,
Pursues us both. Inextricable snares
Are spreading round us—Ha! be calm—Provoke

Ill fate no further—Weigh in wisdom's balance
The pow'rful obligations, which assail'd me.

Med. Can they be weigh'd with conquest, life, and fame,
The vast profusion of my bounty on thee,
Thou weak, thou blind, insensible, and base?
No, my superior soul shall stoop no more.
Though once from foul defeat and death I sav'd thee,
I will not raise thee from thy grov'ling falsehood.
Let fortune's whole malignity pursue me,
I and my children wretched, as we may be,
Outcast, derided by the barb'rous herd,
Spurn'd by th' unpitying proud, with grim despair,
With beggary and famine, our companions,
Will wander through th' inhospitable world,
Nor ev'n amidst our complicated woes
E'er think of thee, perfidious, but with scorn.

[*Exeunt* Medea, Colchians *and* Phæacians.

Enter ÆSON.

Jas. Then let the tempest roar, tyrannic woman,
The billows rise in mountains o'er thy head.

Æs. Well, thou hast seen her; while thy father's eye
Ach'd at the low submission of a hero,
Who with unmollify'd disdain was spurn'd.
Say, will my gentle son persist to court
The fellowship of fury, and abide
The acrimonious taunt, the settled frown,
The still-renew'd upbraiding? Will my Jason

For this to deathless obloquy abandon
His name of hero, while his arm rejects
A proffer'd aid to reinstate his father,
Redeem his country, and refresh his laurels,
With want of action fading?

Jas. There, O Mars,
Thou dost provide a banquet for despair.

Æs. No, for thy valour, son, a feast of glory.
Come, leave this melancholy spot. Return
With me to joy.

Jas. I go—but never more
Speak to thy son of joy. My soul forgoes
All gentle thoughts. Its sad relief is horror
From the grim pow'r of homicide and ravage.
O that this ev'ning, lighted by the stars,
And glimpse of armour, I might turn my back
On Corinth's bulwarks; that the trumpet's clangor,
The shrill-mouth'd clarion, and the deep-ton'd horn,
The groans of slaughter, and the crash of spears,
Might blend their discord for my nuptial song.

[*Exeunt.*

" *Enter* Colchians *and* Phæacians *from the Grove, look-*
" *ing on* JASON, *as he quits the Stage.*

" [*Solemn Recitative.*

" *A Colc.* Thou who didst yoke the brazen-footed
bulls,
" And fearless guide the adamantine plough,
" Which Vulcan labour'd, o'er the direful soil
" Sown with the serpent's teeth, whence crested helms

" And spears high-brandish'd by the earth-born race
" For thy encounter pierc'd the crumbling mould ;
" Thou conqueror, beware : more dang'rous foes
" Doom'd to subdue thee in that palace wait.

" [*Trochaics.*

" *A Phæa.* Soft, alluring wiles are there
" To seduce thee from the paths
" Trod by godlike steps alone,
" Paths of virtue, paths of praise.
" Colchian monsters, syren's songs,
" Might thy mortal frame destroy :
" These will kill thy glorious name ;
" Matchless Jason, then beware.

" [*Solemn Recitative.*

" *A Colc.* Thou yet untainted hero, Ah! reflect,
" That keenest sorrow, poverty, or pain,
" Are light and gentle to the bitter darts,
" Thrice steep'd in gall, which Nemesis directs
" Against his bosom, who, by merit pass'd,
" Once drew th' enchanting melody of praise,
" Then, forfeiting the sweet report of fame,
" O'er his irrevocable loss repines.

" [*Trochaics.*

" *A Phæa.* Shall the nymphs of Tempé's vale,
" Who in rural lays record
" Thy persuasive love, that won
" Kind Medea to thy aid,
" Shall they change th' applauding strain ?
" Shall the discord of reproach

" Wound thy ear, accustom'd long
" To the music of renown ? [*Exeunt.*"

ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter THEANO *and the* 1 Colchian.

1 *Colchian.*

HOPE in its bud was blasted by her anger.

Thea. Unhappy anger! but her wrongs are great;
Nor is my pity less. Instruct me, Colchian,
Was she not fam'd for hospitable deeds ?

1 *Colc.* Oft hath her known benignity preserv'd
The Grecian strangers on our barb'rous coast.

Thea. Yet now a Grecian prince denies her shelter.
Well, introduce me to her.

1 *Colc.* Restless anguish
Will soon transport her hither. Look, she comes.
Here let us watch some interval of calmness.

Thea. Are those her children ?

1 *Colc.* Yes, from Jason sprung.

Thea. They too with intermingling tears enhance
The piteous scene. Thou fair and stately tree,
Who once so proudly didst o'ertop the forest,
What cruel hand despoils thee of thy honours ?
Now dost thou show, as blasted by the lightning,
With all thy tender branches with'ring round.

Enter MEDEA, *her two* Children, Colchians *and* Phæacians.

Eldest Child. Why fly'st thou from us? Wherefore dost thou frown
Whene'er we name, or ask to see our father?
Med. You have no father!
Eldest Child. When we left Iolcos,
Didst thou not tell us, he was here in Corinth?
Now we have pass'd the frightful sea, what hinders
But we may find him?
Med. Never find him more
To you a parent, or to me a husband.
Eldest Child. Alas! thou weep'st.
Med. You too must learn to weep,
Ye destin'd wand'rers in the vale of mourning.
Why do you lift your infant eyes to me?
Your helpless mother cannot guard your childhood,
Nor bid neglect and sorrow stand aloof.
I once had parents—Ye endearing names!
How my torn heart with recollection bleeds!
You too perhaps o'erflow your aged cheeks,
Rend from your heads the venerable snow
Oft, as your lost Medea is recall'd,
And for a hapless offspring mourn like me.
1 *Colc.* Heart-breaking sorrow now succeeds to rage.
Turn, royal mistress; see the holy priestess.
Med. Hail! most humane.
Thea. To Juno render praise.

Med. She owes me refuge. Prompted first by Juno,
I left my native Phasis, and convey'd
Back to her favour'd clime the golden fleece.
Thy part was all humanity.

Thea. Sage princess,
Hear me divulge the menaces of Creon
To drive thee hence. Expect his presence soon.
Fear not his anger. Warranted by Juno,
By my high function, by my nature more,
I gave thee, I continue my protection.

Med. Turn to these infants thy benignant looks.
Them to secure from trouble, and the terrors
Which gather closely on the steps of time,
Is all their mother's care; at whose entreaty
Do thou receive their innocence in charge:
But leave Medea to her own protection.

Eldest Child. Our father long hath left us. By thy side,
And in thy bosom, we had comfort still.
Wilt thou forsake us?

Med. We will meet again.
Remove them from me. I can bear no longer
To view those mirrors, which reflect the image
Of my distress, and multiply my pains.

Thea. Weep not, my children.

Med. Hide their melting softness;
Lest they dissolve the vigour which must save them.
[Medea *continues weeping.*

Thea. Come, lovely mourners, rest a while with me.
Come, and be practis'd to repeat your vows

For this most wrong'd of mothers. You shall lift
Your blameless hands, sweet supplicants, shall kneel
To nuptial Juno, and to rev'rend Themis,
The arbitress of oaths, and plighted faith.
The dove-like voice of your untainted age,
Thus visited by undeserv'd affliction,
May win their guardian mercy; "when the pray'rs
"Of man, false man, grown reprobate by time,
"With all the pomp of hecatombs, would fail."

[*Exit to the Temple with the Children.*

Med. Are they withdrawn?

1 *Colc.* They are.

Med. Then, mighty spirit,
Once more at least thy majesty shall blaze
Such as thou wert amid th' enchanted wood;
When thou didst summon hell's reluctant pow'rs,
And hell obey'd: when dark'ning from her car
The moon descended, and the knotted oak
Bent with thy charms, which tam'd the wakeful dragon,
And safety gave to demi-gods and heroes.

1 *Colc.* Behold the King.

Enter CREON, LYCANDER, *and Attendants.*

Med. Why comes the king of Corinth
To break upon my sorrows, "and to vaunt,
"That his injustice is endu'd with pow'r
"To grieve Medea?"

Creon. To debate, weak woman,

Is thy known province; to command is mine.
Be seen no longer in the bounds of Corinth.

Med. And who art thou dost give Medea law,
And circumscribe the slend'rest spot on earth
Against her passage? Unconfin'd as winds
I range with nature to her utmost bounds;
While, as I tread, mankind reveres my steps,
Its hidden pow'rs each element unfolds,
And mightiest heroes, anxious for renown,
Implore Medea's favour. What is Creon,
Who from the sun's descendant dares withhold
The right to hospitality and justice?

Creon. Not of the number who revere thy steps,
Or supplicate thy favour; one, whose sceptre
Forbids thy residence in Greece. Away;
Range through the snows of Caucasus; return
To Pontic deserts, to thy native wilds:
Among barbarians magnify thy deeds.
This land admits no wand'rer like Medea,
Who with a stranger from her father fled,
Fled from her country, and betray'd them both.

Med. With him I fled, whom thou wouldst foully draw
Through blackest treason to thy daughter's bed;
And for the rest, if equity or wisdom
Were Creon's portion, I would plead before him:
But vindicate my actions to a robber,
Who basely watch'd my absence to purloin
My only wealth! My lofty soul disdains it.

Creon. Hence, while thou may'st, rash woman, ere thou prove
How strong the awful image of the gods
Is stampt on monarchs, and thou feel my wrath
Swift in destruction like the bolt of Jove.

Med. Dost thou recount thy fables to Medea,
The idiot tale, which cheats the gaping vulgar,
To her who knows the secret source of things?
Behold this comely image of the gods!
This violater of the holiest ties,
Whom the dull hand of undiscerning chance
Hath deck'd in purple robes, and pageant gold,
Resembles much the majesty of heav'n!

Creon. Thy bare expulsion shall not now atone.
I will stand forth th' avenger of Æetes
On his false daughter; for thy crimes in Colchis
Vindictive furies in this distant region,
Shame, chastisement, and insult, shall o'ertake thee,
Spoil that fair body, humble that fell heart;
Till, as with bitt'rest agony it breaks,
Thou curse its wild temerity, which brav'd
The pond'rous hand of majesty incens'd.

Med. Ha! thou vain boaster, hast thou yet to learn
That I can rock the iron throne of Pluto;
Can waft thee struggling to Rhiphæan crags,
Where thou shalt rave, and foam, and gnash thy teeth,
Where frost shall parch thee, where the clouds shall scatter
Their storms around thee, whirl in sportive air

Thy gorgeous robe, thy diadem and sceptre?
While I—Oh! fruitless, unsubstantial pow'r!
Must still continue wretched—Oh! vain threat!
Hath he not torn my Jason from these arms?
What then avails the knowledge of my mind?
Stretch'd on the rack of anguish is my heart.
What spark of wisdom in my breast remains?
All is extinguish'd there—Oh, Jason! Jason!

[*Is supported by her Women.*

Creon. [*To* Lycander.] Thou seest the haughty sorceress abash'd
Before a monarch's persevering frown.

Lyc. [*Aside.*] Most injur'd woman!

Creon. Go, transport her hence,
Ere she revive.

Lyc. The multitude already
Begin to murmur; were this holy place
Defil'd by force, their zeal would swell to madness.
Perhaps this princess, for her wisdom fam'd,
May be persuaded to abandon Corinth.
And she revives with milder looks.

Med. [*Aside.*] Pride, pride,
For once be wise; in lowliness disguise thee,
That thou may'st rise to vengeance. King of Corinth,
I only crave three hours to quit thy borders.

Creon. [*To* Lycander.] If she exceed that slender space of time,
Force shall remove her from my loathing sight.

[*Exit.*

Lyc. This contest, princess, thou hast wisely clos'd.

Three hours elaps'd, expect me to return
Thy safe conductor to the kingdom's frontier. [*Exit.*

1 *Colc.* Thou dost not droop. This tyrant's empty threats
Thy very breath could dissipate like clouds,
Which for a while some hideous form assume,
Then pass away dissolv'd to fleeting vapour.
I too will aid thee. By thy father's sister
I was held dear, by Circé, pow'rful queen,
Who taught me various spells and incantations.

Med. Go then, and bring my wand, that potent rod,
Which grew a branch of ebony, o'ershading
The throne of Pluto; sever'd thence, and dipt
Thrice in the cold of Lethe's sleepy waters,
By Hecaté on Circé was bestow'd,
By her on me, to still the winds and floods,
Night's drowsy curtains o'er the sky to draw,
And all its active fires entrance to rest.
Leave us apart. Retire, my faithful virgins,
Who share so kindly in Medea's woes.
I would not pierce your gentle hearts with terror.

[*Exeunt omnes, præter* Med. *and* 1 Colc.

Med. [*Waving her wand.*] First, rise ye shades impervious to the sight;
And you, ye sable-skirted clouds, descend:
Us and our mystic deeds with night surround.

[*The Stage is darkened.*

Thou, by whose pow'r the magic song [*Iambics.*
Charms from its orb th' unwilling moon,
Controls the rapid planet's speed,

And dims the constellation's fires;
" While sounding torrents stop and sleep,
" While fountain-nymphs in dread withhold
" Their mazy tribute from the meads,
" And stiff'ning serpents hear and die:"
Terrific deity, whose name,
And altar stain'd with human blood
On Tauric cliffs the Scythian wild,
And fell Sarmatian tribes adore;
" Wreath'd in snakes, and twining boughs [*Trochaics.*
" Gather'd from infernal oaks,
" Which o'er Pluto's portal hung
" Shed a second night on hell;"
In thy raven-tinctur'd stole,
Grasping thy tremendous brand,
With thy howling train around,
Awful Hecaté, ascend.
1 *Colc.* By the pitchy streams of Styx,
Lethe's mute and lazy flood,
By the dreadful vapour sent
From Avernus' steaming pool;
By th' eternal sigh, which heaves
With Cocytus' mournful wave,
By the Phlegethontic blaze,
Direful goddess, hear and rise.
" Or if, where discord late hath heap'd [*Iambics.*
" Her bloody hecatombs to Mars,
" Thou sweeping o'er the mangled slain
" Dost tinge thy feet in sanguine dew;
" Ah! leave awhile the vulture's shriek,

" The raven croaking o'er the dead,
" The midnight wolf's insatiate howl,
" And hither turn thy solemn pace.
" The winds in magic horror bound
" Shall at thy presence cease to breathe,
" No thunder-teeming cloud approach,
" The hoarse and restless surge be dumb."

Med. No more. The strong constraining spell
hath tam'd
The restive blast; the pliant leaves are fix'd;
The fountains rest; th' oblivious birds are hush'd;
And dead the billows on the silent beach.
Begone—She comes—I feel the rocking ground,
Its entrails groan—Its shiv'ring surface parts.
Scarce can Æetes' child the sight endure.

[*Ex.* 1 *Colc.*

[Hecaté *rises in long black garments, with a wreath of snakes, and oaken boughs on her head, and a torch in her hand*]

Med. O my propitious and congenial goddess,
Who thy mysterious science hast diffus'd
Of potent herbs, and necromantic songs
Through my capacious bosom; who so long
Hast been assistant to Medea's triumphs,
Now thou behold'st me vanquish'd by despair.

Hec. I know thy suff'rings, daughter; but to close
The wounds of anguish, and assuage despair,
Is not the task of hell.

Med. Then give me vengeance.

Hec. On whom?

Med. Creüsa?—No—my high revenge
O'erleaps a trifling maid. Old Æson?—No.
He is my hero's father. But for Creon——

Hec. The hour is nigh, when yonder flood will rage,
This rock be loosen'd, and its structures nod;
Then shall the fury, discord, and red zeal,
Thrice steep'd in Stygian fires, avenge thy wrongs.
Farewell.

Med. A moment stay—My yielding heart
Must ask—Will Jason ever more be kind?

Hec. Search not thy fate.

Med. Unfold it, I enjoin thee,
By him, thou dread'st, by Demogorgon's name.

Hec. Against thyself, unhappy, thou prevail'st.
Ere night's black wheels begin their gloomy course,
What thou dost love shall perish by thy rage;
Nor thou be conscious when the stroke is given:
Then, a despairing wand'rer, must thou trace
The paths of sorrow in remotest climes.

[*She descends.*

Med. Destroy my love! By me shall Jason die?
Oh! insupportable! O pitying Juno!
Assist me sinking to the ground with anguish.

[*Falls to the ground.*

Enter Colchians *and* Phæacians.

1 *Colc.* The streaming purple of the western sun
Glows on these tow'rs and pinnacles again,
Prevailing o'er the darkness, which the wand
Of our sage mistress rais'd—Dejecting sight!

Thy faithful servant can refrain no longer,
But tears must wash the furrows of his cheeks.

Med. Ah! how much more my eyes should stream in torrents!
Ah! how much stronger should my bosom heave,
And sound its agonies in bitter groans
To the remorseless gods! Destroy my Jason!
[*Starting up.*
The dear, false hero! Perish first my art.

1 *Phœa.* "How oft have perjur'd lovers been re-recall'd
"By strong enchantment? Check these vain complaints."
Hast thou not magic to constrain this wand'rer
Back to thy arms?

Med. I have, but scorn the arts
Which may command his person, not his love.
No, fly to Jason. Let the only charm
Be soft persuasion to attract him hither.
O he is gentle as the summer's breeze,
With looks and gestures fashion'd by the graces.
The messenger be thou, discreet and good.
Medea's pride shall stoop.

1 *Colc.* [*Aside.*] I go—though hopeless.

Med. Mean time will I to yonder wood return,
And some deep-shaded receptacle choose.
There, wrapt in darkness, shall my suff'ring soul
The sense of all its injuries disburthen
In secret murmurs, till its rage be spent. [*Exit.*

"*A Colc.* Native floods rough with ice [*Cretics.*

" Rushing down mountain-sides,
" Whirling thence broken rocks;
" Your discordant waves that sweep [*Trochaics.*
" Harshly o'er their flinty beds,
" Yield a more alluring sound
" Than the gently-trilling notes
" Of the tender Grecian lyre,
" Or the swelling strain diffus'd
" From the music-breathing flute.
" Native groves hoar with frost, [*Cretics.*
" Caverns deep, fill'd with night,
" Shagged clifts, horror's seat;
" Oh! to these desiring eyes [*Trochaics.*
" Lovely is your gloom which lives
" In remembrance ever dear.
" You are brighter than my thoughts,
" Which despondency o'erclouds,
" And in these perfidious climes
" Expectation cheats no more.
" *A Phæa.* Torrents swell, tempests rage, [*Cretics.*
" Danger frowns, pain devours,
" Grief consumes, man betrays;
" Such our doom in every clime: [*Trochaics.*
" Yet among the thorns of life
" Hope attends to scatter flow'rs;
" And Credulity, her child,
" Still with kind imposture smooths
" Heaving trouble, and imparts
" Moments which suspend despair.
" Goddess bland, soothing hope, [*Cretics.*

"In thy smile I confide,
"And believe Jason comes.
"All I see delights my eye; [*Trochaics.*
"Ev'ry sound enchants my ear;
"Those rude-featur'd crags are gay;
"Winds in notes harmonious blow;
[*Turning to the sea.*
"Hoarsest billows murmur joy;
"And my long forsaken home
"Wakes the plaintive muse no more. [*Exeunt.*"

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Enter JASON, *and the* 1 Colchian.

Jason.

WHY am I summoned?

1 *Colc.* But once more to greet her.

Jas. And be the mark of scorn.

1 *Colc.* Remind thee, hero,
Of all thy gen'rous labours ne'er deny'd,
But oft repeated to restore the wretched.
Shall thy distress'd Medea be the first
Thou dost refuse to aid?

Jas. It is too late.
She cast me from her, and we now are strangers.

1 *Colc.* I have been long a traveller with time,
And through unnumber'd evils have I noted
Those born of anger to be most deplor'd.
Thou look'st no longer on that mutual care—

Your children's welfare. In the wrathful Jason
Benignity is lost, ev'n nature dead
In the fond father.

Jas. When I nam'd our children,
Her ear was deafen'd, and her scornful tongue
Was sharpen'd into outrage.

1 *Colc.* See them here,
The lively patterns of their mother's graces,
And sharers in misfortune.

Enter the Children.

Eldest Child. Art thou found
At last, my father? In thy search we pass'd
Through frightful waters, and in roaring winds.
Come to our mother, who of thee complains;
And, with a promise never more to leave us,
Speak comfort to her.

Jas. Comfort!

1 *Colc.* Dost thou shrink
To see these pledges of a love like hers?
Oh! thou obdurate, who hast thrown the beauties
Of virtue from thee in thy youthful season,
When ev'ry soft sensation is most warm,
To clasp the cold deformity of guilt!
I have no offspring—Must an old man's eyes
Teach thine their tender lesson? Must a heart,
Which time, and ills, and care might well have sear'd,
Teach thee affection, and a parent's feeling?

Jas. Support me rather, than depress me, Colchian.

I sink—My soul, dissolving in affection,
Hath quite unmann'd me.

Eldest Child. Dost thou grieve to see us?

Jas. No, my poor boys. My spirit bows before you
In love and rev'rence. These indeed subsist
A common care, exacting all regard.
What shall I say?—Not cruel would I seem,
Not ev'n severe—Yet Colchian, let me ask;
Will she———

1 *Colc.* Command her, she is all submission.

Jas. "Amid the woes of separating parents,
"Who like the father can protect the offspring?"
Will she commit them to my charge, that comfort,
Prosperity, and honour, be their portion?

Eldest Child. Ah! do not take us from our mother's arms.

Youngest Child. From our kind mother. Leave us.

Eldest Child. Leave us here to weep with her.

Jas. How constant are these children!
But they were never harass'd by her scorn.

Enter MEDEA, Colchians, *and* Phæacians.

Med. [*stopping short.*] The man who knew, and yet despis'd my worth,
I see before me— Still, thou restiff heart,
Still dost thou rise tumultuous in my bosom;
Oh! thou must bend.

Jas. Well, daughter of Æetes;
Lo! I am here obedient to thy call.

Med. Once was the time, when Jason would have come

Uncall'd, unprompted, but by love alone.
Why do I bring the wasted glass of joy
Back to my view! Oh! torture of remembrance!
Oh, Jason! Jason!

Jas. Speak.

Med. I cannot speak.

Jas. [*Aside.*] My spirit yields—this mute distress o'erwhelms me.

Med. It is decreed to separate thy name
From mine for ever—First to all restore me?
Which I relinquish'd for thee to my country,
The veneration which that country paid me,
My injur'd parents, and their lost affection.
To my untainted virgin fame restore me,
My once-untroubled, unreproaching thoughts.
Impossible—Then hear, and yet be just.

Jas. [*Aside.*] Oh! that this morning she had thus address'd me!

Med. Not love alone, not Hymen's common ties,
But fame and conquest, mutual toils and hardships,
All, which is marvellous and great, conspir'd
To make us one. What stars in distant skies,
What seas, what shores, unvisited before,
Have we not seen together? And what perils
Could each inhospitable clime present,
From which Medea hath not sav'd her Jason?
Our toils at length surmounted, must we part?
My lord—my husband—father of these boys!
Shame, anguish, desperation, rush upon me!
They bind my heart in adamantine woes!

They weigh me down—They bear me to the earth.
[*Kneeling with the Children.*
Thus low behold the issue of the Sun
Imploring pity of the man who scorn'd her.
Jas. Canst thou, O Juno, from thy neighb'ring temple
View this illustrious suff'rer at my feet,
Nor swift destruction from thy altar show'r
On my perfidious head? Why rather, goddess,
"Who hast thy thunder, like thy husband, Jove,"
Didst thou not blast me, when, by furies guided,
I ratify'd but now th' unhallow'd contract?
Med. [*rising.*] What hast thou said?
Jas. Creüsa—is my wife. [*He starts at Medea's looks, then fixes his eyes stedfastly upon her, and, after some time, proceeds.*]
Medea—Ha! Have sense and motion left her!
Her colour dies, which once outshone the morn!
Those radiant eyes, whose majesty proclaim'd
The Sun's own progeny, withdraw their lustre!
Oh! thou most injur'd, utter thy complaints!
Give words to anger, and to sorrow tears!
Med. Astonishment! What prodigy is there?
Look yonder!
1 *Colc.* Go—go, children, to the temple;
Avoid this sight.
[*The Children are led off by a* Phæacian *to the temple.*]
Med. What wonderful appearance
Floats on the main, and stems the lofty surge?

Jas. O execrable perfidy! which fills "the loveliest eyes with tears,"
The noblest heart with pangs, the most enlighten'd mind with madness!

Med. See, where yon snowy concave in its bosom,
Collecting all the motion of the winds,
Drives the huge burthen to th' affrighted shore!

Jas. O had the flood, she sees in frantic thought,
Ingulph'd that bark!

Med. [*advancing towards him.*] What art thou, most presumptuous,
Who dar'st approach the limits of this region?
Hast thou not heard, that bulls with brazen feet,
And sleepless dragons, guard the fatal soil?
He hears unterrify'd—I ne'er beheld
Such majesty and grace.

Jas. Debas'd, deform'd
By guilt's polluting hand!

Med. He speaks—What music!
He claims the golden fleece—What means this warmth,
Which prompts my hand to give the radiant prize?
But wilt thou prove then constant—ever kind?
I must, I will believe thee.

1 *Colc.* What remorse,
What consternation petrify his frame!
And she grows wilder.

Med. Hark! With flaming throats
The bulls begin to roar! The forest trembles!
And see, the dragon hither points his course!
See, his huge pinions beat the tortur'd air!

His monstrous body rolls the blast before him,
And sails amidst a whirlwind! Dost thou droop?
Be not dismay'd, my hero! Stand behind.
Attend, ye demons, whose contagious breath
Deads the sun, who chill the fiercest heart,
And lock in drowsy sloth the nerves of strength!

Jas. Assume thy terrors—Moulder me to dust.
Now call thy demons, whose infernal grasp
May snatch and hurl me to my destin'd pains.
Let me be stretch'd on torturing Ixion's wheel,
Or chain'd in burning adamant endure
The tooth of vipers, and the scorpion's sting;
Oh! rather, rather, than behold thy suff'rings!

Med. Why art thou pale and languid? Thou art safe!
The slumb'ring monster drops his scaly wings!
Thine is the fleece—Medea too is thine!

[Jason *throws himself back, and is received by the* Colchians.]

Confusion and amazement!—Is he vanish'd?
Where am I?—On a rock, a desert cliff,
Which overhangs the unfrequented waves;
No plant, but moss, to hide its craggy sides;
No shelter nigh my tempest-beaten head:
And lo! two infants clinging to my knees,
Who join my grief, and call Medea mother!
O thou false hero, whither art thou fled?
Hark—The wind only answers my complaint,
It is the sea, which murmurs to my groans!
Ha! what art thou, grim shape embru'd with gore?

Why dost thou wave that Stygian torch around?
Art thou Revenge from Tartarus enlarg'd
To aid Medea? Come then, shake thy brand
Before my steps! To perpetrate thy mischief,
The winds shall lend their swiftness, hell its fiends,
The sea its fury, and the Sun his flames! [*Exit.*

1 *Colc.* Resume thy courage.

Jas. Yes, my soul emerges
From dark confusion, now she knows the worst.
My sight is clear'd, my enterprise resolv'd,
And hope enlarges my advent'rous spirit.

1 *Colc.* I hear in wonder, prince. At least prepare thee
To guard Medea in her new distress,
Whom Creon threatens to expel.

Jas. The priestess will be her safeguard till ....

1 *Colc.* Restrain thy speech,
And look behind thee. He is sent from Creon
To drive her hence.

Enter LYCANDER.

Jas. Lycander!

Lyc. Prince, allow me
With this old Colchian to confer a moment.

1 *Colc.* Nay, speak aloud.

Lyc. Thou know'st my errand, Colchian.

1 *Colc.* Yes, if our princess willingly depart not,
Thou wilt by force remove her.

Jas. Base and impious!
Now should these hands, which yok'd the brazen bulls,

Divide thy limbs, and hurl the mangled fragments
From yonder promontory's brow to feast
The scaly monsters in the flood below;
It were a righteous sacrifice to justice:
But thou art brother to the good Theano.

Lyc. Whom thou dost wrong in me. By her consent,
And on Medea's promise to depart,
I came to guide her with respectful care
To Corinth's verge. Compassion for this princess,
Dread of the king, and rev'rence for the goddess,
With all thy changes, prince, perplex my course;
That through the maze of this eventful day
I ne'er shall tread securely.

Jas. Nay, Lycander,
If thou art blameless . . . . .

Lyc. Stop. The king is here
To widen this confusion.

Enter CREON *and Attendants.*

Creon. [*entering.*] I am told,
That with a pensive mien he left the palace,
And join'd a Colchian of Medea's train.
Gods! he is here—disorder'd—with Lycander
And that old stranger—all in sullen silence
At my appearance—Jason—he replies not!
What are your consultations? Speak, Lycander!

Lyc. My liege, I cannot, uninform'd like thee.

Creon. Then, as a king and father, I demand
Of thee, Thessalian hero, why, confus'd
At my approach, thy countenance is fall'n?

Jas. At thy approach? More formidable pow'rs
Could never awe this heart, which nought hath vanquish'd
But its own frailties.

Creon. Visions!

Jas. Hear with patience.
The tutelary deity of Corinth
Sits here in awful judgment. Virtue pleads,
And pity weeps before her. Thou and I
At this tribunal show our guilty heads.
Long have we slumber'd on the couch of folly;
Let us awaken from the cheating dream,
Nor each rebuke the other for his weakness,
But acquiesce in Juno's just decree.
I must annul my contract with thy daughter,
And bid her now eternally farewell.

Creon. Eternally farewell? I dream—Lycander,
Is not Medea gone?

Lyc. My lord, the time . . . .

Creon. Inactive traitor! Go and seize that fiend!

Jas. [*to Creon.*] Hold. Thou esteem'st me still the gentle Jason,
The pliant vassal of my father's will,
And thy ambition. I am chang'd—My heart
Is full of tumult—New-created rage,
Rage at myself, at Æson too, and thee,
Now ravages my bosom—Then be counsell'd,
Nor tempt the wild, ungovernable transports
Of one distemper'd with a foul assemblage
Of guilt, despair, and shame.

Creon. Presumptuous boy!
Do thy exploits by sorcery achiev'd,
Do thy rude trophies from barbarians won,
Exalt thy pride to brave a Grecian monarch?
When now, from all inheritance expell'd
A needy exile, thou hast no support,
But from my throne, whose patronage is granted
To thy imploring father.

Jas. I reject it,
And own no patron, but my sword and name.
Can I want aid, the Argonautic leader?
While Hercules, while Telamon and Peleus,
While sacred Orpheus, and the twins of Leda,
Remain unconquer'd to assert my cause?
Why do I measure folly back to folly,
And here degrade my honours and renown
With boasts resembling thine? Farewell for ever.
[*Exit cum* Colc.

Creon. Ha! I perceive his purpose. Haste, collect
[*To one of his attendants.*
A faithful band; secure Medea's vessel.
Ye blackest demons of resentment, rise;
March by my side, and brandish you my sceptre!
[*To another of his attendants.*
Thou shut the city-gates! Let none depart
Without my licence! I will hold him still,
And cast him prostrate at Creüsa's feet!

Enter THEANO.

Thea. I heard thy threat'ning voice, O blindly fix'd
In disobedience to the queen of gods.

Creon. Dar'st thou, sole auth'ress of thy sov'reign's ills,
Confront his anger? First on thee, confed'rate [*To* Lycander.
With this rebellious, shall my vengeance fall.
By thy design'd misconduct Jason twice
Hath seen Medea.

Lyc. Chance, or heav'n's appointment,
Not my contrivance . . . .

Creon. Seize and drag him hence;
Low in a dungeon hide him; chain him down
In damps and darkness!

Lyc. Citizens of Corinth,
This place is holy! In the name of Juno
I claim protection!

Thea. Universal rev'rence,
From your forefathers at the birth of Corinth,
Hath guarded still th' inviolable grove.

Creon. Do ye recoil, ye cowards? Rebel, traitor,
I will assemble those shall force this refuge,
The seat of priestly craft to aid sedition;
When thou in torture shalt atone thy crime!

Thea. Once more I warn thee to revere a goddess.

Creon. No, I revere a god, the god of thunders!
Jove, thou didst toil for empire; so shall Creon,
And show the earth a pattern of thy sway!
For empire thou thy father didst dethrone,
Thy Titan kindred plunge in deepest hell.
The giant, lancing from his hundred hands
A hundred rocks to shake th' Olympian tow'rs
Thou didst with labour vanquish! Shall these shades

Which awe the vulgar, shall the ready prey
To ev'ry firebrand, or the woodman's ax,
Obstruct a king? No, insolent revolters,
Soon shall you see me lift the bloody scourge
Of chastisement, unsheath the sword of havoc,
And vindicate my glory! [*Exit cum suis.*

Thea. Impious man!
Do thou consult thy safety.

Lyc. Be not anxious.
The king's own rashness shall secure Lycander.
Though years may roll on years, ere we again
Shall meet in peace.

Enter JASON.

Jas. Medea to thy temple
Is fled from all her virgins, who entreat
Thy kind permission to pursue her steps,
Where'er her frenzy leads!

Thea. My help is ready.
And to thy guardian care I trust my brother,
Whom Creon threatens with immediate death.
Yet something whispers, something sure divine,
That other clouds, of black events will break,
Ere a new morning rise on troubled Corinth.
"And we, surviving each portentous storm,
"Derive a sad security from horror." [*Exit.*

Lyc. Whate'er this mystic language may import,
Prince, give attention.

Jas. Speak.

Lyc. Thy only course
Is to embark from Corinth with Medea.
Jas. It was my secret and determin'd purpose.
Lyc. Nor yet a secret. Our suspicious tyrant,
If he could rule his discontented subjects,
Would stop thy passage. But thy just design
The public shall befriend, by me alarm'd
At Creon's threat to violate the grove.
Jas. Can I requite thee?
Lyc. Let me serve thee first;
Requite me after, as my wants may dictate.
Is not thy father yonder?
Jas. Let him come.
Go, and expect me shortly on the beach. [*Ex.* Lyc.

Enter Æson.

Æs. What have I heard? Th' exasperated king—
Jas. Hath told the truth. His daughter I relinquish.
Æs. Off with this bridal pageantry, which mocks
With gay delusion my disastrous age.
Reach me again my sable; from thy hand
I will receive it: from thy barb'rous hand
Let dust be sprinkled on my joyless head.
Nay, rather turn invincible against me;
Lock in that nervous gripe these snowy hairs;
And to the hov'ring eagles on the beach
Cast my disfigur'd relics! Dost thou pause?
Think'st thou, that Jason's father will be seen
Decrepid, tott'ring with distress and years,
A vagabond, a suppliant for protection

Among the happier princes? No, my son,
Though not like thee the faulchion I can wield,
And mow my foes before me, I can die!

Jas. Com'st thou with threat'nings? That tremendous goddess,
Whose piercing eye from yonder fane discerns
Guile in its naked shape through ev'ry garb,
And marks ingratitude for signal vengeance,
Knows that we merit both to die: yet, dying,
We could not expiate our unmatch'd offence.

Æs. What unaccustom'd, terrifying sternness
Frowns on that aspect? Gentle have I known thee
From infancy to manhood, ne'er before
Have felt thee dreadful!

Jas. Ever from thy fears
Wilt thou take counsel? Can the voice of pity,
Benevolence, and equity, convey
No admonition? O exalt thy thoughts
From this base earth, the mansion of deceit,
Of perjuries and crimes. "Erect thy visage to
"Themis' heav'n-thron'd patroness of justice.
"Invoke her aid, that strengthen'd thou mayst hear,"
Nor be confounded at thy son's resolves.
By no persuasion, artifice, or menace,
My now-reviving dignity of mind
From its own summit shall again descend.

Æs. What would my Jason?

Jas. Take the holy priestess;
Repair to Creon: with united counsels

Him first from impious violence dissuade:
And then——

Æs. To whose protection must I fly?

Jas. To mine. Abandon Corinth, and at Thebes,
Not three days march from these detested gates,
Expect my presence. Hercules is there;
My friend, my soldier. He with ev'ry hero,
Who once obey'd my standard, will again
League their auxiliar swords, and save Iolcos.
Let this suffice—If not—Persist no more.
Thy son is fix'd, immoveable as fate. [*Thunder.*

Æs. Thy mightier genius awes me! I submit!
We are all guilty—Juno so proclaims!
But, oh! amid these prodigies, my Jason,
Not one alarms me like the rude commotion,
Which shakes thy placid bosom! Be compos'd.
I will conduct Theano to the king. [*Exit.*

Jas. Look down, connubial goddess, and with hope
[Jas. *turning towards the Temple.*
Let thy appeas'd divinity indulge
A hero off'ring at thy holy shrine
His spirit humbled with repentant sighs.
You too attend, ye favourable gales,
And swiftly waft us to the kind embrace
Of our companion, Orpheus; who shall breathe
" His tuneful consolation in a strain
" Of grief composing energy to charm"
Distraction's rage, till new-born reason smile.
Then with her children, lovely as the mother,
Shall blooming Tempé on its flow'ry lap

Again receive her; "while Penéus' stream
"Blends with the flitting warblers on his banks
"His murm'ring cadence to delight her ear:"
And I once more along th' accustom'd vale
Shall, by the lustre of the silent moon,
Walk by her side attentive, while her tongue
Unfolds the pow'rs of heav'n's resplendent train
Of magic numbers, and mysterious spells,
And feasts with knowledge my enraptur'd soul. [*Exit.*

Enter Colchians.

"Sire of Æetes, god rever'd [*Iambics.*
"By our forefathers on their sands
"Bleach'd by the Euxin's restless foam,
"Effulgent origin of day;
"Who with illimitable view,
"As from the amber-portall'd east
"Thy coursers fiery-man'd proceed,
"See'st the deep-bosom'd woes of men;
"Whether plac'd in mildest climes, [*Trocheics.*
"Or beneath thy sultry wheels,
"Whether freezing near the pole,
"All the various race of care.
"Yet to thy sad paternal eye [*Iambics.*
"Can this diversity of grief
"Not one present through all thy course
"To match thy own Medea's pain.
"Lo! ev'ry flow'r of wisdom fades
"Within her large and fertile breast,
"A desert now by tempests rang'd,

" The seat of wild discordant thoughts.
" God of wisdom and of light, [*Trochaics.*
" O relume her darken'd soul!
" Let her, though begirt with ills,
" Still thy progeny be known. [*Exeunt.*"

ACT V. SCENE I.

THEANO *descending from the Temple,* ÆSON *and* Colchians.

Æson.

WHERE is the priestess, Colchian?
1 *Colc.* There descending.
Pale consternation overcasts her visage.
Thea. O most portentous, execrable sight!
I led the virgins to rejoin your princess,
Who had escap'd their care—Mysterious Heav'n!
Where was thy pow'r to check a mother's rage?
Where was thy mercy, when her savage hand
Unclos'd the jaws of slaughter on her children?
Æs. Oh! all-surpassing evil!
1 *Colc.* When and how? Oh, speak!
Thea. A knife of sacrifice she seiz'd,
And in their tender bosoms plung'd its point!
We found her planted near their welt'ring limbs;
Her fiery eye-balls on their wounds were fix'd;
A ghastly triumph swell'd her wild revenge,
And madness mingled smiles with horror!
Æs. Horror

Is my companion now! The race of Jason
One common crime hath swallow'd in its gulph!

Thea. The goddess bow'd in pity from her shrine;
When straight a voice, oracular in thunder,
Whose awful clamour must have reach'd your ears,
Peal'd o'er the rocking temple. 'Impious Creon.'
The voice proclaim'd, 'thy guilt hath fill'd its measure;
'Then fall, thou victim to the gods of hell!'

Æs. Tremendous sentence!

Thea. I, with fearful steps,
Haste to the palace.

Æs. Make me thy associate,
And I to calm his violence will join.

[*Exeunt* Theano *and* Æson.

MEDEA *rushing from the Temple,* Phæacians *following.*

1 *Colc.* Behold, where, dropping with her children's blood,
The lost Medea comes!

Med. It is begun!
Now, to complete my vengeance, will I mount
The burning chariot of my bright forefather;
The rapid steeds o'er Corinth will I drive,
And, with the scatter'd lightnings from their manes,
Consume its walls, its battlements and tow'rs,
Its princes, people, palaces, and temples!
Then, as the flames embrace the purple clouds,
And the proud city crumbles from its base,
The demon of my rage and indignation,

All grim and wrapt in terror, shall bestride
The mountainous embers, and denounce abroad
To gods and men my wrongs, and my revenge!

1 *Colc.* How is thy wisdom exil'd from thy breast,
Its native seat, nor leaves one trace behind
To show it once was there!

Med. Weep'st thou, old man?
Ha! speak; thou venerable mourner, speak
Thy cause of anguish! Hadst thou not a daughter
Wise like Minerva, like the morning fair,
And once thy dearest comfort? Hath she left thee,
Left thy decrepid head for grief to seize
And dash against the tomb? "Weep, weep, old man,
"The slight remainder of thy days exhaust
"In lamentation; she is lost for ever,
"Lost to herself and thee: and never more
"Shalt thou the beauty of her face contemplate,
"Nor hear again the wisdom of her tongue."

1 *Colc.* Thou dost mistake me for thy stern Æetes.
I am but one among th' unnumber'd Colchians,
Who mourn in thee their nation's glory fall'n.

Med. I well deserve this pity—yours—and yours,
Who kindly weep around me. As I pass,
I wade through seas of tears—I hear no sound
But sighs and groans from sorrow-beaten breasts.
Dishevell'd fragments of uprooted hairs
From the wild head of anguish fly about me!
Is it not fitting? When Medea mourns,
Shall not the skies assume their blackest robes,
And scowl upon mankind? Medea sighs;

Shall not hell groan, and heav'n reply in thunder?
It is the offspring of the Sun, who wrings
Her helpless hands, who rends her scatter'd locks!
My heart is cold—The thread of life unwinds.
Now triumph, death—Thy conquest is Medea!

[*She sinks into the lap of a* Phæacian.

1 *Colc.* Repose her harass'd limbs with tend'rest care.
If this delirious transport be no more,
Than some short tumult of the heated brain;
Refreshing sleep may cool that seat of thought,
And wand'ring reason sojourn there again.
Essay your vocal pow'r, harmonious maids;
Some new and soothing modulation choose;
Dress in persuasive melody your numbers,
Whose artful cadence from the breaking heart
May steal its cares, and fold them in oblivion.

A Phæacian *turning towards the sea.*

Azure god, whose active waters [*Trochaics.*
Beat with endless toil below,
Calm the ruder blasts to slumber;
While to yonder grove, which bends
Stately o'er thy shaded bosom,
Softly-sighing gales aspire.
And, ye zephyrs, which ascending
Fan the plumy verdure there,
Lulling whispers, drowsy murmurs
Through the trembling foliage breathe
O'er the wakeful brow of sorrow
Care beguiling sleep to spread.

Or my gently-soothing measure
On your downy pinions bear
Through the grief-distemper'd spirit
With delusion sweet to steal,
Till, on music's lap dissolving,
Madness lull its weary head.

1 *Colc.* Your queen recovers, and her look serene
Shows, the mild beam of reason shines anew.

Med. Grief, as o'erlabour'd with its cruel office,
Awhile is pausing, till its strength return.
I will at least possess the short relief
To see my infants. Sure, my faithful friends,
From my sad heart no evils can erase
Maternal gladness at my children's sight.
Go, lead them from the temple—They will smile,
And lift my thoughts to momentary joy.
Not gone, my virgins? Wherefore this delay?
Why all aghast? Why tremble thus your limbs?
Ha! whence this blood? My hands are dipt in slaughter.
Speak, ye dumb oracles of terror, speak! [*Rising.*
Where are my children? My distracted brain
A thousand dreadful images recalls
Imperfectly remember'd—Speak, I charge you?
Where are my children?—Silent still and pale!
Enough—Fell pow'rs, your purpose is accomplish'd;
Medea's suff'rings are complete and full!

1 *Colc.* The swelling passions struggle in her breast,
And find no vent. My ever-honour'd mistress,
This is the time for tears and exclamations.

Med. Can exclamations down the wind convey
From these retentive ears my children's groans?
Or can this murd'rous hand by tears be whiten'd?
" Hear, Neptune! o'er this citadel emerge
" To reach my crime; or send the pow'r of whirl-
winds
" To sweep my footsteps from the stable earth!
" In rapid flight to Caucasus transport
" And fix me shiv'ring on the pointed rock!
" Let Nemesis revive the breathless clay
" Of my slain infants, to the rav'nous beak
" Their lips disfigure, and their tender fingers
" Arm with the vulture's talons; that their wounds
" May be imprinted on their mother's breast
" With Promethèan torture, and her heart
" In blood bewail the error of her hand!"

1 *Colc.* It was the act of ignorance and madness.
Just Themis knows thy purity of mind,
And will, with pity, cleanse that erring hand.

Med. Not the disburthen'd sluices of the skies,
The wat'ry nereids with the ocean's store,
Nor all the tears, which misery hath shed,
Can from the mother wash her children's blood!
Where shall I hide me from the piercing day?
What man will grant protection to my guilt,
What god afford me safeguard to his altar?
Thou must alone receive me, thou, O earth!
Then, while I crush my bosom on thy surface,
And grasp the dust within my struggling hands,
Distain my limbs, and strike my head against thee,

At length in pity of my suff'rings sue
The loit'ring gods to rear the friendly bolt,
And close my sorrows on thy peaceful breast!

1 *Colc.* See Jason too unconscious of his loss!

Enter JASON.

Jas. Is she restor'd?

1 *Colc.* Restor'd to full sensation
Of her increas'd afflictions, there she lies.

Jas. "They shall be soon diminish'd! fate at last
"Hath folded up its inauspicious scroll,
"And fairer volumes open to our eyes.
"I see, you doubt me all. That pale dejection
"Reveals distrust and fear! I tell you, Colchians,
"Prophetic Themis from her spotless shrine,
"When she unfolds the oracle of justice,
"Fills not her priest with more enraptur'd fervor,
"Than now her present deity supplies
"To my stability of soul, which marks
"Success in prospect, and will show me still
"Not less than Jason in the brightest hour,
"Yourselves can witness, of his pass'd achievements."
Perhaps she sleeps! [*Looking attentively on* Medea.

1 *Colc.* Ah! no.

Jas. Then, dearest woman,
Look on me, hear me, trust me once again.
I have resign'd Creüsa and her kingdom;
I have appeas'd my father; Creon's wrath
Is ineffectual now: then deign to cast
One glance on Jason, on thy suppliant husband

Return'd in tears of penitence and shame,
But with redoubled tenderness and truth!

Med. Oh! Jason—Thou and I have once been happy!
What are we now?

Jas. Let thy forgiving breath
Revive my courage fetter'd yet and tame
With thy displeasure; and my active love
Shall soon transport thee from this seat of wo;
Then, as we bound before the fav'ring gale,
Shall fondly whisper, we may still be happy!

Med. [*Starting up.*] Survey these hands!

Jas. What blood is this?

Med. Thy children's.

Jas. Inhuman Creon! could thy malice choose
No other victims than my blameless boys?
I come, incens'd Corinthians, to divulge
This profanation through your madding streets;
Myself will guide your torrent of revolt,
And whelm its billows on this royal savage!

Med. If heav'n had once meant kindly to Medea,
Some tyrant had been found, some other hand,
Than hers alone to spill her children's blood!
The season for upbraiding is no more;
But know, thou wretched like myself, that madness
Arm'd my blind rage against them, and the deed
Now weighs me down to everlasting night!

Jas. [*Falling on his knees.*] O thou, whose equal balance to mankind
Distributes justice and restoring mercy,
If pray'rs from this polluted breast may reach

Thy pure abode, exert thy righteous pow'r;
Drop thy assuaging pity on her heart;
On me exhaust the quiver of thy vengeance!

Med. Was not my portion of distresses large
Ye pow'rs obdurate? Hath this heart refus'd
To sigh, these eyes been sparing of their streams?
Impell'd by indignation, still my spirit
Would challenge your injustice, which requir'd
My children's blood to mingle with my tears.
Take back the mighty mind you fram'd to break,
First rent by anguish, then by guilt deform'd!
[*Draws a poniard.*

[*A voice from the temple.*] Hold, offspring of the Sun;
arise; repair
To Juno's shrine; reply not, but obey.

" Med. *Malignant goddess, to prolong my pain,*
" *Dost thou unbrace the firmness of my arm!*
" [She drops the dagger.
" *Yes, to accuse thee at thy shrine I come!—*
" *The guardian thou of marriage, hast permitted*
" *The violation of connubial faith;*
" *And from that shrine didst pityless behold*
" *The fruit of marriage by a mother's hand*
" *Dash'd on thy pavement!* [Thunder and lightning.
" *Yes, amidst thy lightnings*
" *And triple bolted thunder shalt thou hear*
" *My execrations to provoke thy terrors;*
" *Who, single auth'ress of Medea's wrongs,*
" *Dost now suspend the period of her woes.* [Exit *Med.*"

Jas. Celestial presence, I adore thy greatness;

Yet thy tremendous voice, which rocks these bulwarks,
Appals not me, who bid destruction welcome!
Hope, which cements the structure of the heart,
From mine is moulder'd, and despair is lodg'd
Within the ruins. [*He falls.*

Enter LYCANDER.

Lyc. Gods! what new reverse
Hath cast the first of heroes to the earth?
Thy mariners expect thee; haste away.
Too high the ferment rises! Oh! recall
Theano's last presage of black events!
The wild impatience of religious rage
Stings ev'ry bosom! "Our Corinthian dames
"Range through the streets with torches in their hands,
"Invoking Juno, hymeneal Juno!
"An impulse more than natural directs
"Those armed numbers to some hideous act!
"They breathe demoniac fury on the palace!
"Should Creon meet them he must fall." Rise, prince;
I must attend thy flight. Our timely absence
Will save our streets from homicide!

Jas. No, death may reach me too!

Lyc. For pity—Ha! the skies
Share in our tumult, and a bloody veil
Hangs o'er the sick'ning sun! The air wheels round us!
Grim Neptune yonder shakes his stormy trident!

Why heaves the loosen'd rock? Why drop these clouds
In threat'ning murmurs from their dusky folds
Streak'd with sulphureous gleams?

[*Thunder, lightning, and the stage darken'd.*

Jas. [*rising.*] This suits my soul
For its infernal journey all prepar'd,
A pale attendant on my children's ghosts
In Tartarus to dwell, while they repose
In blest Elysium!

1 *Colc.* Look, the holy priestess
Breaks from the palace in disorder'd haste,
And to her temple flies! In consternation
Old Æson too is nigh.

Enter Æson *and* Thessalians.

Æs. My son! my son!

Jas. If thou dost bring fresh evils thou art welcome!

Æs. We found the harden'd king! My words were vain,
So were Theano's! With a desp'rate band,
Of life regardless, and contemning Juno,
Against her grove he sallies!

Creon. [*behind the scenes.*] Since no longer
You dread my sceptre, you shall feel my sword;
" Which o'er your mangled carcases shall hew
" Its purple passage to chastise the author
" Of this revolt, and chase barbarians hence."

Lyc. The king's rash voice. He charges.

[*A shout within.*

Æs. Hideous roar! [*Thunder and lightning.*
O Jove, be merciful!
Lyc. He gives the signal,
And shows the tumult through those livid flames!
Jas. I hear the clang of arms! Unmov'd and cold,
My heart rejects that once-enliv'ning sound,
And sighs for dissolution! Pause awhile,
Sad spirit, till Medea's fate is known,
Then prompt my sword to justice on myself!
Æs. That shout denounces triumph!
Lyc. Yes, and safety,
To all but Creon. Give the torrent way!

Enter Corinthians.

1 *Cor.* Where is the honour'd priestess? We will bring,
If she so wills, the sacrilegious head
Of our slain tyrant to her sacred feet!
Lyc. Be silent all! Theano from the goddess
To this assembly moves! Night flies before her;
Earth, seas, and heav'ns are calm'd!

Enter THEANO.

Thea. Ye sons of Corinth,
Old men of Colchis and Thessalians, hear!
At length the gods restrain their vengeful rod!
The dreadful scene is clos'd! Iolchian prince,
Thou from Æetes' daughter art disjoin'd!
Look, where the goddess through th' aerial champain
Sends in a chariot, drawn by winged dragons,

That all-transcending woman into climes
Remote, but whither is from thee conceal'd!

[*Thunder.*

" *Enter* MEDEA *in a Chariot.*

" Med. *Fine breathing couriers through the fields of air,*
" *Arrest your course obedient to this wand;*
" *Ah! what detains me longer in the sight*
" *Of hateful Corinth? but on thee to cast*
" *A parting look, and some forgiving tears,*
" *Shed on thy errors, Jason—Oh, farewell!*
" *Constrain'd by Juno, and my parent gods,*
" *Who have subdu'd my anger, not my grief,*
" *O'er seas and earth to wander and explore*
" *The devious steps of destiny I go:* [Thunder.
" [Exit in the chariot."

Jas. Heav'n guide her fortunes. This shall govern mine. [*Offers to fall on his sword, but is prevented.*

Thea. Unmanly desperation! Will the grave
Hide thy disgrace, or ill-tongu'd rumour die,
When thou art ashes? No. Recall thy manhood!
Thou hast a father's kingdom to redeem!
Go, save a nation! These afflicted maids,
These aged Colchians, to their homes restore.
Thus shall the censure, which thy frailty merits,
Be chang'd to blessings on thy gen'rous deeds,
And time's light finger loosen from thy breast
Its root of care, till peace of mind return!

[*Exeunt omnes.*

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